tional news and its performance as compared to international standards and other news agencies like BBC;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps contemplated by the Government to bring professionalism in the media and to raise the standard of the news services?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Even though no specific study has been undertaken in the recent past, from time to time steps have been taken to improve the news gathering and editing capability of the news media so that it can come up to international standards. Review of the capability of the Government media in projecting national and international news is a continuous process and suitable steps are taken periodically to bring professionalism in the news media subject to availability of funds, personnel and inter-se priorities within two electronic media. Acquisition of latest hardware, training of news personnel, more visual inputs, improvement in the style of presentation are some of the measures being contemplated.

Central Assistance for Tourism Projects in Mysore

5286. SHRI A. SIDDARAJU: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government had sanctioned Central assistance for tourism projects in Mysore during 1996-97;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the amount released out of the sanctioned amount;

(c) whether the Union Government are aware that Hogenkal falls and Mahadeshwara Hills in Mysore are places of tourist attractions;

(d) if so, whether the Union Government propose to develop the said places during 1997-98; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Department of Tourism, Government of India has sanctioned Rs. 3.90 lakhs and released Rs. 1.80 lakh to construct Sulabh Shouchalaya Complex at the premises of Maharaja's Palace in Mysore during the year 1996-97.

(c) to (e) Central financial assistance for tourism development is provided to State/UT Governments on the basis of specific proposals received from the State Governments and availability of funds. The prioritisation of projects for the central financial assistance during 1997-98 is scheduled in the first quarter.

[Translation]

Completion of Guna-Itawa Railway Line

5287. DR. RAM LAKHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister had announced in Gwalior on December, 1996 to speed-up the work on Guna-Itawa rail line;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) the length in kilometre of above line completed so far;

(d) the funds sanctioned and expenditure incurred on the above project;

(e) the time by which the entire project is likely to be completed;

(f) the steps taken by the Government to link Bhind district Headquarter with Gwalior; and

(g) the time by which the approval is likely to be given for construction of bridges over the river between Bhind and Itawa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The work is being progressed speedily. The outlay in 1996-97 was increased from Rs. 22 crores to Rs. 37 crores.

(c) 169 kms. of the line has been commissioned so far.

(d) The present sanctioned cost of this project is Rs. 256 crores and the expenditure incurred so far is Rs. 170.29 crores.

(e) By the end of the 9th Five Year Plan.

(f) The gauge conversion of Nonera-Bhind section, a part of this work, is targetted for completion in 1998-99.

(g) The construction of bridges over the rivers between Bhind and Etawah is a part of the sanctioned project and would be taken up and completed within the 9th Five Year Plan.

[English]

Running of Trains between Bangalore-Thiruvananthapuram

5288. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of trains running daily between Bangalore and Thiruvananthapuram;

(b) whether there is a demand for introduction of an additional fast train on the said route; and

(c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) At present one

pair of express train viz. 6525/6526 Kanniyakumari-Bangalore Express provides daily service between Thiruvananthapuram and Bangalore besides 6335/6336 Nagarcoil-Gandhidham Express (weekly) between Thiruvananthapuram and Bangalore.

(b) and (c) Some representations from MPs/MLAs, including from travelling public, have been received in this regard. These demands have been examined but not found feasible due to operational and resource constraints.

[Translation]

Reservation Facility at Nalanda Railway Station

5289. SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the reservation facility is available at Nalanda Railway Station for the trains starting from Patna Junction to Delhi, Howrah, Bombay etc;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government propose to provide reservation facility at this station with a view of facilitate the passengers;

(e) if so, the total number of seats for which reservation facility is likely to be provided at this station; and

(f) the time by which adequate reservation facility is likely to be provided from this station?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The sale of tickets is too meagre to justify allotment of reservation quota.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) and (f) Do not arise.

Transmitter Network on Border Areas of Jammu and Kashmir

5290. SHRIMATI PURNIMA VERMA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to set up a network of high and low power transmitters on the border areas of Jammu and Kashmir with a view to educate and entertain the people of the area; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) With a view to further augment TV service in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the border areas, two HPTs, 3 LPTs, 10 VLPTs and one transposer are presently under implementation/envisaged to be set up in the State.

[English]

Non AC-II Class Compartments in Shatabdi Express

5291. SHRII S.D.N.R. WADIYAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of non AC-II Class compartments in Shatabdi Express plying between Mysore and Chennai;

(b) whether the Government are considering to introduce few non AC-II Class compartments to help ordinary passengers travelling from Mysore directly to and from Madras; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) None.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Survey for Laying Down Bijnore-Muzaffarnagar Rail Line

5292. SHRI SOHANVEER SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering to conduct survey for laying down railway line from Bijnore to Muzaffarnagar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress made in this regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Employment on Compassionate Grounds

5293. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULESTE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme in the Telecom Department which provides for employment of compassionate grounds to the next of the kin of the employees who die in harness;

(b) if so, the duration by which the department provides such employment to the family members of the deceased employees; and

(c) the details in this regards?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Such cases are processed on the basis